

11 May 2010

Fm: Executive Director/Endorsing Agent
Evangelical Free Church of America

To: DOD COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW WORKING GROUP
1600 Defense Pentagon Washington, DC 20301

Attn: CH (Col) Gary Linsky, USA

Subject: **REPEAL of 10 USC *654 (Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy-DADT)**

The impact of repealing 10 USC 654 commonly known as the “*Don't Ask; Don't Tell*” Policy may or may not directly affect every member within our military. It's difficult sort out all the ramifications before the rules are written and implemented. At this point, we *cannot fully know* the regulations that will need to be written to support any change regarding allowing open homosexual behavior within our military establishment. But as listed below, the potential harm to military chaplains and service members who share their faith is significant.

It is a dangerous step for our leaders to go forward with a repeal of the current policy. In granting special access and ‘*rights of protection*’ to a specific class of people based on a type of sexual behavior, we will head toward a slippery slope of unintended consequences. The agenda is clear within the gay and lesbian movement. They wish all to accept and embrace their behavior and lifestyle. They desire ‘head of the line’ privileges, from adoption to spousal benefits as well as social affirmation through changing the definition of marriage.

Thus, “equal rights for homosexuals” go well beyond having the right to simply serve within our military. *The Uniform Code of Military Justice* will have to be changed to accommodate behavior that has been illegal longer than our nation's history and immoral for more than four millennia within the Judeo-Christian sacred writings. A repeal of DADT will have further inevitable ripple effect on local, state and other federal entities and statues. A repeal will have a wide impact on financial, social and the domestic well-being of this country for centuries to come. And most clearly, chaplains and those whom they serve will be affected.

My strong opposition to a DADT repeal is based on a number of factors:

1. Freedom of Speech and Religious Freedom for chaplains will be curtailed.

The freedom to speak of sodomy or homosexual behavior as being ‘sinful,’ unlawful or unhealthy will clearly be against implemented policy. The certainty exists that reprimand, discipline, dismissal or other punitive action will be taken against a person or chaplain who speaks out against historically-forbidden practice that has now become an expected or protected behavior. While some might consider this extreme, imagine the effects of a chaplain who speaks out publically against a policy officially supported by an Equal Opportunity Officer and the unit commander?

- a. Already the freedom of speech is being abridged by expected ‘pluralistic prayers’ of the Chaplain Corps of the various branches. Private comments or counsel that does not affirm homosexual conduct or homosexual marriage

could be construed as 'bigotry' and lead to punitive action, marginalization and discharge.

- b. The freedom of the chaplain to counsel will be abridged. Comments or speech that does not affirm homosexual conduct or homosexual marriage could be construed as 'bigotry' and lead to punitive action, marginalization, or even discharge.

2. Freedom to assemble in religious retreats or settings without fear of reprisal will be impacted.

Command-sponsored retreats and marriage enrichment gatherings will be impacted by gay members desiring to attend or to be accommodated. This will provide challenges that are not easily resolved. Restricting such events to heterosexual straight couples only for a retreat planned would bring reprisal and charges of discrimination.

3. Freedom of religious sacraments and practices will be challenged.

Chaplains may be requested to perform marriage, baptisms, administer communion and provide other religious services to practicing homosexuals within a religious setting. Should the chaplain not be fully complicit, civil rights discrimination complaints will follow. The chaplain will be subject to an abrogation of religious freedom in accordance with his/her denominational tenets or against his/her conscience.

One of our highest duties is to uphold and defend the Constitution and to protect the rights of those within our care. Repeal of DADT will curtail the ability of our chaplains to minister in an environment that is free from overt sanction. We owe it to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and guardsmen to retain the traditional values which have made the fabric of this nation different and strong. Notably, the policies and practices of another nation should not control our decisions as a free nation. What another nation may do should not define what the American people are all about.

The Repeal of DADT and its implementation will eventually trump religious expression and freedom of speech as we know it. Therefore I appeal to our leaders to refrain from changing the current law. Should the repeal become law, I believe it will be difficult for chaplains to serve with complete integrity as evangelicals within the military. We owe it to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and guardsmen's to retain the traditional values which have made the fabric of this nation different and strong.

As a church representative (and former Navy chaplain), I foresee the day when the military may have problems retaining some of its best chaplains if the repeal is approved. Furthermore, I will be reluctant to endorse chaplains to serve within an institution that embraces and affirms immoral conduct. Approximately 60-75% of all 3300+ of military chaplains and chaplain candidates align themselves with evangelical churches and their beliefs and values. Most chaplains have serious concerns for any Repeal of DADT; I represent nearly 102 of them within our endorsing body and the 1,460 sending churches.

Our military should not serve as a cultural or social experiment for this type of innovation. Our military men and women deserve better.

The Commander-In-Chief as well as our senate and congressional leadership must realize that our nation's moral and spiritual values are *and have been* in place for valid reasons. **The political expedience on behalf of a few--does not support the removal of higher moral ground.** Leadership takes courage. Have the courage to move away from and defeat the misguided initiative in this repeal.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roy L. Bebee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Roy L. Bebee
CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret)
EFCA, Director of Chaplains
Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent